

T W O

Sutable Discourses;

The one of

Religious Courage,

The other of

CHRISTIAN SUPPORTS,

Under the

TERRORS of DEATH.

By *SHADRACH COOKE*, M. A.
a Depriv'd Clergy-man of the Church of *England*.

ὍΣπε δ' ἀνδρὶς συνεχώρηκε καλῶς, σφδς παρ' ἡμῶν, καὶ τα δεῖα ἐπίσται, Εἰπὼ.
A patient Man will bear for a time, and afterwards joy shall spring up unto him, Ecclus. i. 23.

L O N D O N:

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W. O. 11

Social Disfranchisement

Religious Controversy

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

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To the Inhabitants of the Parish of St. Mary Islington, Middlesex.

My Friends and Neighbours,

WHILE I was more nearly concern'd among you then I am at present, I receiv'd from you such Favors, as have made a lasting Impression on me; for which you may be assured of the best Returns I can make.

And I must withal acknowledge my Obligations for some Parochial Kindnesses I do yet experience.

In my unhappy Recess from your publick Matters, I have this satisfaction, which I dare say you'll grant me.

That I have given more Proofs than one, of my readiness to encounter Difficulties, and to decline Private Interest in my Station among you.

Tho I must withal do you this Justice, That in the most grating Performances, and amidst the utmost Violence, (till the dismal Torrent bore all before it) I met with very little Alteration, in what some may reckon the main Instance of Respect and Kindness.

Confirm'd thereby in the Opinion,

That an honest Zeal for strict Conformity and Loyalty, (Those inseparable Twins) will meet with the most, and certainly the truest Encouragement.

And I verily believe, no one (whatever has been said or done by some) did ever yet win or proselite Dissenters of any kind, by receding from his Rule. For a wise and good Man, of a different Perswasion, cannot think better of us, for loosening our Ecclesiastical Ties, tho we do it for his sake; A complement in Religion being of all the most nauseous, and likelier to lose ground, than to get it.

But I shall proceed no further in matters of this kind, now that after so long discontinuance, I am thus again talking to my Neighbours; Some of whom will not, I dare say, refuse even so small a Present, from an old Acquaintance.

The Subject of the ensuing Discourses is indeed very Divine and Serious, and deserves the utmost Attention; for our Faithfulness unto Death, is that alone which can entitle us to a Crown of Life.

Rev. 2. 10.

In

Numb. *In short, my Friends, to live and die well, or to Dye the death of the*
 23. 1011. *Righteous, and to have our last end be like his, is our great Concern,*
 St. Luke *and the one thing needful.*

10. 42. *Therefore at the Font every one is devoted by the sacred Sign, " In*
" Token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the Faith of
" Christ Crucified, and manfully to fight under his Banner, against Sin,
 Publick *" the World, and the Devil; and to continue Christ's faithful Sol-*
 Bapt. *" dier and Servant unto his lives end.*

To forward us herein, and to give assistance to that Religious Cou-
rage, Holy Zeal and Resolution, so very useful in our troublesome
Race; and to furnish us with such Aids and Christian Supports, as
may be proper and seasonable at the end of it, is the design of what is here
 Deut. *laid before you. And Oh that they were wise that they understood*
 32. 29. *this, that they would consider their latter end !*

How many of our Neighbours have we known descend to the Grave
since our first Acquaintance ! How Remarkably is our Church-yard
swoln with Human Dust ! And the decay'd Church, which calls so loud
 Hab. 2. *for Repairs, that, in a manner, The Stone cries out of the Wall,*
 11. *and the Beam out of the Timber does answer it : How is it crowded*
under ground by our Neighbours, in the years we have lived together !

And, Sirs, are not our Days spending apace ? Our glass, we must be
sensible, runs swiftly, for ought we know, but a few Sands are left ; And
it cannot be long before we also shall encrease the number of the Dead :
 Col. for *May we encrease that of the Blessed likewise, " That thro' the grave and*
 Easter *" gate of Death we may pass to our joyful Resurrection.*
 Eve.

Which is the earnest Prayer of

Dear Friends and Neighbours,

Your very Affectionate,

Humble Servant,

SHA. COOKE

St. MARK 8. 38.

Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of Me, and of my Words, in this adulterous and sinful Generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father, with the holy Angels.

AT the 27th. Verse of this Chapter we find our Saviour puts this Question to his Disciples, *Saying unto them, Whom do Men say that I am ?* Which Inquiry he doth not make for his own better Information, or Satisfaction, in this Case, *Because he knew all Men,* John 2. 24, 25. *and needed not that any should testifie of Man, for he knew what was in Man :* But it was with Design, as we may see afterwards, to set his own Disciples Right and Orthodox in the Opinion or Knowledge of himself. For upon their answering, Ver. 28. *John the Baptist, but some say Elias, and others, one of the Prophets :* He saith unto them, Ver. 29. *Whom say ye that I am ?* Which occasioned that Confession of Peter, in the Name of them all, *Thou art the Christ, the Messiah, the true Saviour or Redeemer of Mankind.* Whereupon our Saviour proceeds to give them a more full Account of the End of his Coming, and of the Things concerning himself, particularly of his Death and Passion, Ver. 31. *And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer, and be rejected of the Elders, and of the chief Priests, and Scribes, and be killed.* Now

B

Peter

Peter, notwithstanding the Soundness of his late Profession, was so far from being ~~then~~ Infallible, that he runs upon the most gross Error and Mistake; for he was so scandalized at the News of a Suffering and Crucified Saviour, that upon this Account of himself, *Peter* took him, and began to rebuke him, Ver. 32. Whereupon our Saviour takes occasion to reprove him, and he doth it smartly, Ver. 33. But when he had turned about, and looked on his Disciples, he rebuked *Peter*, saying, Get thee behind me Satan, for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of Men; which seems to imply either, First, That *Peter* was infected with that Opinion so common amongst the Jews, who look'd for such a Saviour, as would be a great and mighty Prince, that should deliver them out of their present Misery and Servitude, and reduce them and their Nation to a most Flourishing State and Condition: Or else Secondly, and as a Consequence hereof, He reproves that his Sensual and Carnal Spirit, and intimates to him and all Men, that Suffering might be, as indeed it is, opposit and disagreeable to all worldly Interest; but it's otherwise with him and all his Followers, for he was, as you have heard, *To suffer, to be rejected, and to be killed.* And herein he tells all his Disciples they were to resemble him, and must expect and prepare accordingly, Ver. 34. And when he had called the People unto him, with his Disciples also, he said unto them, *Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross, and follow me.* As Christ was a Man of Sorrow and acquainted with Grief, did meet with wonderful Difficulties and Afflictions: So his Disciples also must through much Tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God And the induring this to the utmost extremity (even to Death it self) though it be our present loss, or disadvantage, is the certain way to provide for and secure our future Interest: *For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it;*

it ; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, or the Gospels, the same shall save it, Ver. 35. And thus to procure the favour of God, and to make a Provision for our immortal Souls in Heaven, (whatever we do, or however it costs us) is both in it self more eligible, and of greater concern to us than all things here below ; and is withal such a Consideration as will make us most firm and steady in this Holy Faith and Profession, or expose us to the severest Displeasure of our Lord hereafter, if we are by any means dissettled in our present Fidelity to Christ and his Doctrin ; For what shall it profit a Man, if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul ? Or what shall a Man give in exchange for his Soul ? Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me, and of my Words, in this Adulterous and Sinful Generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father, with the holy Angels.

From which Words I shall speak to these following particulars, which seem to be the Natural result of them as now considered ;

First, What that is which our Saviour here warns all his Disciples against, or what is meant by our being ashamed of Christ and of his Words.

Secondly, What are, or may be the Temptations thereunto.

Thirdly, The Aggravations hereof.

Fourthly, The Judgments or Punishments to be inflicted for it.

Fifthly, The Means to escape or avoid it.

Now in the First place, That great Evil which our Lord here speaks of, may imply some, or all, of these following particulars.

First, An utter Rejecting or Renouncing of him, and his Doctrin.

Secondly, An external Denial or Disowning them.

Thirdly, A Recoiling or Aversion to some more difficult Parts, or duties of Religion.

Fourthly, Some Actions or Proceedings that are contrary to the real Interest, or Advantage, of true Religion.

The Evil of all which, we shall better apprehend by a distinct Consideration of each particular.

First then, *To be ashamed of Christ and of his Word*, may imply an utter Rejecting or Renouncing of him and his Doctrine; and so may ~~either~~ refer to such our Saviour speaks of, and threatens so severely, Matth. 10. 14, 15. *Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your Words, when ye depart out of that House, or City, shake off the Dust of your Feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tollerable for the Land of Sodom and Gomorrha, in the day of Judgment, then for that City:* Which is meant of such who reject the very first overtures of Grace and Salvation. And now if he pronounces their Case so desperate, how much worse (if possible) may we conclude the Circumstances of those, who having received, do shamefully desert that Holy Faith and Profession, and utterly cast off or disown all their former share and interest in Christ and his Doctrine; that is, in short, an utter Apostacy from the Faith of Christ, and a Renouncing that their Holy Religion. Which Sin, with the self-same Note and Character of it, as here exprest, is mentioned by the Apostle, Heb. 6. *It is impossible for them who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the Heavenly Gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and had tasted the good Word of God, and the Powers of the World to come: If they shall fall away, to renew them again to repentance: Seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.* Where the Nature of this Sin, or the great Ingredient of its Guilt, is the Crucifying Christ, as it were, a Second time, and so again exposing him to shame.

shame. Whereupon, as the learned Annotator observes, *That must needs conclude renouncing or denying of Christ, the looking on him as such the Jews pretended him to be, when they Crucified him, that is an Imposture: That is, in short, Men of Corrupt Minds, reprobate concerning the Faith,* 2 Tim. 3. 8.

Secondly, This Phrase of being *ashamed of me, and my Words*, may signify an external Denyal, or Disowning of Christ and his Profession, even when we have a perswasion in our own Minds contrary thereunto; but we (upon some accounts to be spoken to presently) do herein act contrary to the inward Sence and Conviction of our own Minds and Judgments: And so we may hereupon explain or interpret this Expression, or the Words here before us, from that parallel Place Matth. 10. 32, 33. Where our Saviour speaks to the same, or like Argument, *Whosoever therefore shall confess me before Men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in Heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before Men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in Heaven.* Which Words do very plainly refer to a generous Owning, or publick Attestation of Christ and his Doctrin, with the Condemnation of the contrary Faintness or Cowardize in those who yet really own and profess his Religion. And of this Nature was that Sin St. John 19. 38, 39. c. 12. v. 42, 43. which the Scripture it self takes notice of in *Joseph of Arimathea, being a Disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews; and in Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by Night. Among the chief Rulers also many believed on him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him lest they should be put out of the Synagogue, for they loved the praise of Men more than the praise of God.* Where we see plainly, there may be an inward Belief in Christ, or a full and thorough Perswasion of him, and his Doctrin; when yet in shew and appearance there may be no external Owning or Confession of it: And such as was this may be the

the case of many Christians, who may be too often prevailed upon to disguise or dissemble the internal Sence and Dictates of their Minds and Consciences, and basely force their Tongues to give their Hearts the Lye: But now to believe in Christ, and upon all Cases, and in all Circumstances and Conditions, to assert, own, declare, and attest as much; this is truly Generous and Christian, a Glory and an Honour to Christ and our Profession; whereas to counterfeit or cover what we are, or what we believe, is the basest Imposture, the most cowardly Hypocrisie, and is most certainly, *Being ashamed of Christ and his Words in an Adulterous and Sinful Generation.*

Thirdly, An other thing imply'd or signify'd by this Expression, *Being ashamed of me and of my Words*, is a recoiling, or aversion to some more difficult Parts or Duties of Religion: That is, when Men will profess Christ, or own his Faith or Religion, and go on fairly with him for some time; but shake hands, leave or desert him when it comes to some extraordinary Stress or Difficulty. Thus it was in the Case before us, *Peter* seems to make a fair Profession of his Faith, *When he said, thou art the Christ*, Ver. 29. But we find he was strangely startled, and mightily out of the way upon our Saviours informing him of those great Troubles and Calamities that should befall him. The News of a Saviour was readily imbraced by him, but he doth mightily regret his distressed Circumstances: Nor was this self-same thing a less Scandal to some other of his Disciples; for upon our Saviours telling some, of his *Giving his Flesh for them to eat, and his Blood to drink* (which he did by his Death and Crucifixion for them) *Many therefore of his Disciples, when they heard this, said, This is an hard saying, Who can hear it?* Some things required of us to believe or do, that are easily observed or practised, do not, and indeed cannot much affect us. But this is an instance of our chief,

chief, if not pure, observance to Christ, that we yield our selves wholly and intirely to him even in those Things and Cases that are most abstruce, difficult and uneasie; herein consists our chiefest Owning and most glorious Profession of our Faith in him: And from such a practice he infers the Doctrin we are now upon; for as it plainly appears by the Context, from this Duty or Principle laid down, Ver. 34. *Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross, and follow me:* I say upon this he infers, *Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, &c.* As if he should say, He that will not hearken to me, or accept of me on such Terms and Conditions, how hard soever they may seem to him, is *Ashamed of me, and shall fare accordingly.* And he that takes not his Cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me, Matth. 10. 38. Our most eminent and proper Owning of Christ and Profession of his Faith, is when we are called by him to the greatest streights and hardest Duties. *Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast thou not made a Hedge about him, and about his House, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his Hands, and his Substance is increased in the Land. But put forth thine Hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy Face,* Job 1. 10, 11. What was here falsely applied to this good Man, is too often verified in many others. We are willing to hearken to God, and to observe him on easie Terms and in prosperous Circumstances; but if any thing thwarts this, like the young Man in the Gospel, on the same Occasion, *It makes us go away Sorrowful.* Whereas now a Sound and True Faith disputes no Commands, sticks at no Opposition; for the greater the Hardship and Difficulty, the more our Duty and Obedience: So that in short we may go a great way in a fair Profession of Religion, but if we refuse or decline the difficult Parts,

Duties,

Duties, or Instances of it, wherewith God may try and exercise our Faith. This is a Rebellion against, or a Disfession of Christ and his Doctrine, *A being ashamed of him and his Words*; for every Christian should be ready to say with the Apostle, Rom. 8. 38, 39. *I am persuaded, that neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor Things present, nor Things to come, nor Height, nor Depth, nor any other Creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Fourthly, *Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and my Words*, may signify such as act contrary to the true Interest, and real Advantage of that Faith and Religion which they profess. And this part or instance carries in it the guilt of all the foregoing Evils, and goes a considerable step further; to make a fair Pretence, and glorious Profession of Religion only to disgrace, abuse, or betray it; is the most aggravating Circumstance of Guilt and Condemnation, and seems to be the very case of Judas himself, who was one of our Saviours professed Disciples, attended him constantly, heard his gracious Words, saw his Miracles, and was a constant Partaker of his Goodness; yet who but this was the Villain that betrayed him? And therefore our Lord upon that Occasion seems to bespeak this Wretch in such a manner as methinks, goes home, and cuts to the very quick, when he said, as 'tis St. Matth. 26. 50. and St. Luke 22. 48. *Friend wherefore art thou come? Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a Kiss? Betrayest thou!* who was so near to me, and so much obliged by me. If any wise to injure or desert our Religion, or upon any account to be ashamed of Christ, is infinitely dangerous; to promote or forward a contrary Interest, and to be our selves helpful and instrumental to the ruin or prejudice of that our own very Faith

Faith and Profession, is the highest Dishonour we can offer to God and our Religion, and the utmost violation of all Honesty and Conscience.

And having thus given you an Account of this great and dangerous Evil, of *being ashamed of Christ, and his Words*, and shewed to you what it is, or wherein it doth Consist: Being 1. An utter Renouncing our Religion, 2. An external Disowning of it. 3. An Aversion to some of its more difficult Duties. Or 4. Such Actions and Proceedings as are contrary to the Interest of Christ and his Doctrine. I proceed according to the Method propounded, to Consider in the 2. Place, What are the Temptations to this so great and dangerous Evil. And they are generally such as these.

1. Base and Unworthy Compliance.

2. Secular Gain or Interest.

3. The Fear or Danger of Suffering.

1. This great Evil is too often occasioned through Base and Unworthy Compliance: Though Religion, or the Concern of our Souls, is the most serious and weighty matter in the whole World; yet nothing is so much trifled with, and disregarded, and rendered plyant to every turn, and occasion; as if the mode of the Times, eminent Examples, and prophane Scoffs and Derisions, were to be the Rule and Standard of what we were to believe or do in these great and momentous Affairs; Men being too often become really *ashamed of Christ and his Words* in a *Sinfull and Adulterous Generation*: Wherein our Saviour refers to the very Cause or Occasion here laid down for their so doing, as if it were unseemly to own and profess Christ and his True Religion, amidst a Generation of Wicked and Sinful Men. *Wherein they think it strange if you run not with them into the same excess of Riot, speaking Evil of you,* 1. Pet. 4. 4. Great Examples and Importunate Solicitations are very powerful with most men,

who are too easily carried away with the Stream, and follow a multitude to do Evil: But the Temptation is as Unwarrantable as what it ends in. And such the Emperour *Constantius* thought it to be in that memorable Case, which is thus related by *Eusebius*. “*Constantius*, the Father of *Constantine*, had this Device came into his Head, that may be a paradox to hear as it was strange to practice; He put it to the choice of all his Courtiers about him, even to the very Judges themselves, or such as were placed in the chief Stations of Authority, Whether they would Sacrifice to Devils, and remain in his Palace in their wonted Honour, or upon refusal be removed from his Favour and Presence. Whereupon when the Court became divided, and some went one and some another way, the Excellent Prince discovering himself; Those that yielded he Reproached for their Cowardice, and Hypocrisie, but greatly Approved and Commended those that kept their Integrity to God; looking on those as Traytors to their God, and so not worthy the Favour of their Prince: For how, said He, shall they be imagined to be Faithful to their King, who are found False to God himself? And therefore utterly Banished them from his Presence: But they that were Firm and True to God and their Religion, such he did believe would be just and faithful to Himself. Σωμοποῦ-
λαχος καὶ αὐτῆς τῆ βασιλείας τὰς φράγας, &c. He made them the Protectors and principle Officers of his Kingdom, saying, They were worthy to be ranked in the number of his Bosom Friends and Dearest Relations, and to be valued and esteemed above his highest Treasures. Herein acting agreeable to that Prudent and Pious Resolution of *David*, *Mine Eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land that they may dwell with me: He that walks in a perfect way, (or is perfect in the way) He shall serve me: He that worketh deceit shall not dwell in my house, he that telleth lies shall*

shall not tarry in my sight, (or shall not be established)
 Ps. 101. 6, 7.

This is the First Thing. Base and Unworthy Compliance is very frequently the Occasion of Mens being ashamed of Christ and his Words.

Whereupon follows in the Second Place, as another great Inducement or Temptation hereunto.

Secular Gain or Interest : Which our Saviour hath respect to in the Case before us, as one Occasion of this great Evil, saying, as he doth, Ver. 36. *What shall it profit a Man, if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul? &c.* Intimating the great Prejudices and Discouragements against him and his Doctrin, were the Solicitations or Temptations of Things here below : Which yet in the greatest Enjoyments were no wise able to compensate the great Evil they were thereby seduced to, of being *ashamed of Christ, and his Words.* Now secular Wealth, or Greatness, is such a powerful Ingagement against all kind of Goodness, That the Devil reserved this Temptation for the last; and therefore, it's like, looked on it as the greatest he could use: And which he hoped might prevail even upon our Saviour himself, *For he sheweth him all the Kingdoms of the Earth, and the Glory of them. And saith unto him, all these Things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.* Now what could not prevail upon him, is God knows too powerful with many of us, who either through the Ambition of our Spirits, or the Necessity of Nature, are by our secular Interest too often carried beyond the bounds of our Duties, and hereby made compliant to Unjust and Dishonourable Practices. And may not the Apostle seem to have reference to the worst Consequences this way, in the 2 Pet. 2. *There shall be false Preachers amongst you, who privily shall bring in damnable Heresies. And through Covetousness shall they with feigned Words make Merchandise*

of you. But now we may the less wonder at that unhappy influence, which this Vice hath over Faith and a good Conscience; when we remember that Covetousness, or the Love of Secular Gain and Interest did make Christ's own Disciple shamefully forsake him, and basely betray him to his most Malicious Persecutors and Murderers. *One of the Twelve called Judas Iscariot went unto the Chief Priest, and said unto them, What will ye give me and I will deliver him unto you? and they covenanted with him for Thirty pieces of Silver, Matth. 26. 15.* And if the value of about Three Pound Fifteen Shillings could prompt a Disciple to this horrid Treachery, we may be apt to suspect at least, that a more additional Temptation this way may have too much prevalency upon mean and sordid Spirits; *Wherefore Love not the World, neither the things that are in the World. If any Man Love the World, the Love of the Father is not in him, 1 John 2. 15.* So powerful are the things here below to keep, or to withdraw Men from a hearty Love and Regard of God and Religion.

The Third and Last thing prevalent to this most fatal Evil and Impiety is, The Fear or Danger of present Sufferings. A Life of Ease, Pleasure and Plenty, is grateful to all Men; whereupon many do readily embrace the smooth side of Religion: But Suffering and Persecution are things contrary to Flesh and Blood, and are indeed severe and terrible Tryals, such as will even shake the most steady and resolute Christian. Wherefore to speak with the Apostle, in this Case also, *Who is sufficient for these things?* And whatever Men may now think, or talk of it at a distance; yet if ever God should call us to this fiery Tryal, it will require a most steady Faith, together with extraordinary assistance of the Divine Spirit, to carry us through such extreme Hardship and Difficulty: *Peter* who was so constant with our Saviour, and who

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was withal so brisk, plain and generous, in his Profession of Christ, and so resolved as nothing could be more: And who its reasonable to think was in his own Judgment firm and immoveable, was yet we know strangely surpris'd, and utterly confounded when it came to the pinch; insomuch that hardly ever Man was guilty of such a base and sudden Revolt. He found when Danger was very near and threatening, quite different Judgments and Apprehensions of things then when he considered it only at a distance; as will be the case of every Man whom God calls to this most severe and difficult Duty.

There are great and unavoidable Prejudices and Reluctances in human Nature against Torments or Sufferings, and very strange Perplexities and Misgivings of Mind, in that great Change from this to another World: Besides there must needs be unconceivable Convulsions arise in us, from our Injury or Loss in those things that are instrumental to our present Ease and Comforts; and therefore our Saviour might well put that Question, *Are ye able to drink of the Cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the Baptism that I am Baptized,* Matth. 20. 22. This he tells us shall be the Portion of some; but upon this Rock very many have made *Shipwrack of Faith and a good Conscience*, having proved the greatest cause of Mens being *Ashamed of Christ, and his Words in an Adulterous and Sinful Generation.*

Having thus considered what that is which our Saviour here warns us against, by our being *Ashamed of Christ, and his Words.* And Secondly, What are, or may be the Temptations thereunto; I proceed to consider in the Third place. The great Guilt or Aggravation hereof; which will largely appear to us from the Consideration of these following Particulars.

1. Thus to be *Ashamed of Christ, and his Words*, is the greatest Disservice and Scandal to Religion: For if we
con-

consider the Expression, according to a meer literal acceptation, That is ever more looked upon as most Base and Scandalous, which Men are loth or ashamed to own, or acknowledge. Certain it is, That a Disowning or Desertion of Christ, and his Religion in whatever way or kind we do it, is an open Declaration to the World of our great dislike thereof, a plain Repentance of what we have professed, and as it were Advice or Precaution to others against all future concern, or regard for God and Religion: The Actions of such a Man do seem to speak the Sense of his Mind after this, or the like manner; *All the whole business of Religion is meer Noise, Cheat, or Imposture. And whatever Men talk, or say about it, is all vain and insignificant. Why should we wait on the Lord any longer? It is in vain to serve God, and what profit is it that we have kept his Ordinance? Therefore they say unto God, depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty that we should serve him? And what profit should we have if we pray unto him?* In short, That Religion is not worth the Owning which a Man cannot Suffer, Bleed, and Dye for.

2. And this brings us to a Second Aggravation thereof; That it is the highest Indignity or Dishonour to God. Such is imply'd in the very Expression for it, *Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my Words*: So that to be thus guilty is to affront God, and is a perfect and open Defiance to Heaven it self; for 'tis the peculiar and immediate Cause of God, who is the Author of Religion, for whose sake and on whose account this is Instituted and Enjoyn'd us: So that thus basely to desert, or any wise to forsake or deny him, is not only a withdrawing our Fealty and Allegiance from him; but the setting up a profess'd Hostility and Rebellion against him, and a down-right Declaration that *we will not have Him to reign over us*. In a Word, This is the greatest Obstinacy, the most

most daring Provocation, the highest Treachery, that a mortal Creature can be guilty of, against the most gracious and almighty Being of God; and carries every thing in it that may render *it exceeding Sinful*.

3. Another great Aggravation hereof is, That it is contrary to the Sentiments of our Minds, and such as is an Injury or Violation ~~to our~~ own very Consciences: For that Man hath nothing to palliate or excuse his Crime, that breaks through and violates the Sense or Perswasion of his own Conscience, which is more to him than Ten thousand Witnesses. And therefore though Men may be Deaf to this inward Guide, and by their Lusts or sordid Interest be prevailed upon, to contradict or stifle those internal Sentiments, yet no Man can think them happy, much less hath any reason to envy them what they thus obtain. For *this Candle of the Lord* (as is *Solomon's* Phrase for Conscience) will sometime or other glare in their Faces, or burn them to the quick, and torment them severely for being thus Unjust, Base and Treacherous, to themselves. And though we see it, God knoweth too often, that Men Sacrifice Peace of Conscience to base and unworthy Interest, as if worse than the unjust Judge they did not regard God or Man, nor themselves; yet this Perplexity and Vexation, which is inevitable hereupon, will be a perpetual Plague, and like a troublesome Ghost, haunt and fret them wherever, or however they are. And a Man is scarce capable of a greater Condemnation or Punishment than thus to decry or reprove his own Actions. *Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that Thing which he alloweth.* Rom. 14. 22.

4. And which doth ensue upon this, The Case which is here Condemned by our Saviour; is a Reproach even to humane Nature: Firmness and Constancy of Mind is generous and manly, an Argument of a brave and courageous

degenerous

ragious Spirit; such *That* is always accounted which can bear it self up, and maintain its Integrity against all Opposition and Allurements to the contrary: And therefore such resolute trusty Souls have evermore had the general esteem and commendation of good and wise Men. As on the contrary, its an undoubted proof and instance of an unmanly, pitiful or ~~dangerous~~ Temper, easily to forgo or yield up our Truth and Integrity, the greatest Glory of our Nature; so that he debaseth himself to the vilest degree, and most miserable Condition, that debauches the noblest Principle of his Soul, as is the case of such who are ashamed of God and a good Cause. Another Aggravation that we may add to this, Is in the

Fifth Place, Even the present Insecurity of such Men, or of such a Condition, as is here spoken of by our Saviour: And this consideration added to the rest cuts them clear off from all their holds: Such base Hypocrisie and Dissimulation will not last long, and doth but seldom answer such Mens designs in it; for as *Solomon* saith, *The Lip of truth shall be established for ever, but a lying Tongue is but for a Moment.* Base compliances and such unworthy practices in the cause of God and Religion, do frequently carry Guilt in their Foreheads, and do sooner or later prove ineffectual and dangerous to themselves, and very often spoil or frustrate their own Actions or Designs, *And then all Men that see them shall laugh them to Scorn:* Whereas certain it is, That Uprightness and Integrity, a close and steady Adhesion to an honest Cause, and a good Conscience, will be more approved of, succeed better, for our Interest, and carry us most happily thorough all Difficulty and Opposition; while Base, Cowardize and Dissimulation, will render us Improperous in all our Designs, and make us every way Odious, and Hateful to God and Man.

From whence we proceed to consider, in the Fourth Place, The Judgment and Punishment to be inflicted for it; *Of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father, with the holy Angels.* Where our Saviour, as you see, doth consign the Punishment of such base Deserters of him, and his Religion, to a future Judgment and Tribunal. Whereupon, by the way, we may make these following Observations.

First, This threatning of a future Recompence, is not designed so as to imply an utter Exclusion of all present Punishment or Judgment, to be inflicted on such Men; they may be, and frequently are, met with and punished severely in this World. The sting, or guilt of Conscience, will sometime fret and torment them, for such base and unworthy Practices; they are frequently exposed to the scorn of good Men, and the contempt of the World, and are no small Sufferers in their present Enjoyments: These or the like Punishments do, or may overtake such Offenders even now at present, it being a Practice that is frequently injurious to Mens Secular Interest and Security, as we heard before. Thus, with a future, this may also refer to or not exclude a present Punishment, as God in his Wisdom may think fit and convenient. Though too in the

Second Place this may imply, what doth sometimes happen, That wicked Men, and among these, such as are thus guilty, may pass through this World with Ease or Impunity; and perhaps, to outward appearance, meet with no Punishment, no Retribution, for so great Impiety. For many good Causes God may, for a while, forbear or delay their Punishment, to the great and general Day of Accounts, when he will give to every one according to his Works. So that we are not to judge from the present Impunity; or, which is more, the Flourishing and Prosperous Condition of such Men, though so guilty against God, that he is altogether regardless of them and his Honour: Though he doth forbear, he doth not alto-

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together

gether forget them, but will (if not before) call them to strict Examination another Day.

Whereupon we may observe again, Thirdly, That the mentioning of such a future Retribution, may be, and doubtless is, with some design of showing or representing the greater Judgment or Vengeance of God, that is treasured up against them ; as if such profligate Sinners could not be enough, or sufficiently punished till Christ were invested with his Sovereign Power and Authority. So that this is here mentioned as a very heightning Aggravation of their Punishment, they may consider (and tremble to think on it) that their Doom is reserved for that Great and Solemn Assize. *Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and my Words, in this Adulterous and Sinful Generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father, with the holy Angels.* And its being thus expressed, may shew the Punishment of such to be very Severe and Terrible upon these following Accounts. As it doth imply,

1. Christ's utter Disowning of them.
2. After the most disgraceful Sort or Manner.
3. At the most solemn Time or Season.
4. In Mens greatest Streights and Necessities. And
5. A Consequence of most dreadful Ruin, and eternal Destruction.

First, This threatning (here before us) doth imply or signify Christ's utter Disowning of them, and that is here represented to us these Two ways: First, By his being *ashamed of them* ; that is, such shall be rejected by him, and quite disowned, from having any share or benefit in his Redemption, and the Kingdom of his Father. Now, as God saith by the Prophet concerning good Men, *They shall be mine, saith the Lord, in that Day when I make up my Jewels* : So contrariwise may be here said, or intended of these, Christ at that great Day shall utterly disown them, and cast them from his Presence for ever ; as is still
Secondly,

Secondly, further implied and signified by the time here expressed for his so doing, *When he cometh in the Glory of his Father, &c.* At that great and solemn Day, which is the final Consummation of all things, after which there is nothing to be done, no more Accounts to be made, then shall he pass on them an irrevocable Sentence of Condemnation. And is not this a most severe and affrightful Case, that forebodes and threatens an eternal Banishment from the Divine Love and Favour, and the procuring of God's utter Hatred and Displeasure, of which there can be no repeal or recovery. To be thus rejected and abandoned by Christ our Lord, who hath shed his Blood for our Redemption, and has laid on us the strictest Obligations imaginable to own and obey him, is a most heightning consideration of Misery and Condemnation. To see, at that great Day of Accounts, the gracious Saviour of the World, thus utterly to reject and cast off those for whom he shed his Blood; and instead of Reward or Redemption, to pass a dismal Sentence of Punishment against them, is a cutting consideration even now to think of, What will it be to experience another Day? Considering in the

Second Place, That this will be done after the most disgraceful Sort or Manner : *Of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, (Nec Lex est justior ulla.)* For it both represents the Equity of the Divine Proceedings, together with the sharpness of the Punishment, as they have been *ashamed of him*, so will he be of them; he will reject and disown them in the most Vile and Contemptuous manner; he will be even ashamed to look upon them, and will cast them from him with Scorn and Confusion. Now there is nothing that doth generally more affect human Nature, than to be treated with Contempt; to a good and generous Spirit it is most cutting and intollerable. And you can't but observe from daily Experience, that nothing goes so deep, or afflicts so much, as to be slighted and contemn'd: From whence we

may make a guess of the great Punishment of all such Souls as shall be thus treated by Christ at that Day. There is even to common Malefactors a kind of secret Pity and Commiseration, though Suffering for very Notorious Crimes and Villainies ; but those Men are prodigiously Guilty and Miserable, that fall with universal Scorn and Derision : Yet such, and much worse, is the Punishment here threatned, *Of them shall Christ be ashamed.* However others may fare, these shall suffer Shameful and Unpitied, or one great Punishment to be inflicted on them is, Shame or Contempt : And you know among Men, That 'tis a great heightning, and sometimes indeed the utmost Aggravation of a Suffering, to have the Ingredient or Circumstance of Shame or Scandal. And what now shall we think of these, at that great Day, when whatever is really Shameful and Scandalous shall be the Lot and Portion of such Sinners. For,

Thirdly, All this shall be at the most solemn Time and *Season, Of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father, with the holy Angels.* Shame or Contempt is a relative Evil, that which doth properly depend on the view or apprehension of others, which is more and more heightned or improved (that is rendered still the worse to bear) the more, and greater the Objects we are thus exposed to ; and therefore how great and intollerable is this most Shameful Punishment like to be, that is executed or inflicted after such a Serious and Solemn manner, bearing in it whatever may render it Affrightful and Terrible, *Of him shall the Son of Man, &c.* that is, Christ who was God and Man, this great God shall then be ashamed of him. And as if this were not enough to superadd hereunto, it is Aggravated from the Time, Company, or Circumstances here mentioned, *When he shall come in the Glory of his Father, with the holy Angels :* Every Word bears in it a most cutting Consideration. This shall be their Lot and Portion from him,

him, when he shall appear in his infinitely glorious God-head after the most Solemn and Triumphant manner, and comes with Millions of Angels to call all the World to Judgment, before infinite Multitudes of such Pure and Holy Spirits, and before all the World he shall pass such a dismal Punishment upon them. As if he should say, Men have very great reason to be careful against this Evil, considering that such a present denial, or being ashamed of Christ, shall be thus repayed hereafter. They that disown him now before Men, *in an Adulterous and Sinful Generation*, shall be shamefully rejected by him before the holy Angels. He that will be invested with infinite Glory and Majesty, will for *This* be then ashamed of them in the presence of these Pure and Immaculate Beings. And the consideration of these Solemn Circumstances, is a most dismal Aggravation of that future Condemnation and Punishment reserved for them against the great Day of Judgment. Considering in the

Fourth Place, That this is in Mens greatest Streights and Necessities; *Of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father, with the holy Angels*; a time of the greatest distress and danger. For the future Day of Accounts, or Judgment, (whereof this is such a lively Representation) will be the Season when we shall stand in most need of God, and Christ our Redeemer: Then to have a share and interest in Heaven, and to have favour with the great Judge of the World, will be our greatest, and indeed our only Comfort. Nothing will then stand us in stead, or avail us, but such a happy Provision as this: But oh! how miserable now must the contrary case of such Men be, who have provoked him to the highest degree, and rendered him their utter and implacable Enemy. To be conscious to ourselves, that we have done all we could to Affront and Abuse our Lord and Saviour, as is too much the Case of these Sinners, must strike the deepest Melancholy to our Souls.

Souls. Then when we have most need of Comfort, we shall have the the least of it; and instead of Acceptance with God, have a Shameful and Bitter Sentence from him: So that what *Solomon* saith, (*Prov. i. 24.—*) may be fitly applied to the Case before us. *Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no Man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my Reproof: I also will laugh at your Calamity, I will mock when your Fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and destruction cometh as a Whirl-wind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: For that they hated knowledge, and did not chuse the fear of the Lord. They would none of my counsel: They despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.* Whence we proceed to consider,

Fifthly, A consequence of most dreadful Ruin and Destruction; for the great End and Design of that his most Solemn coming to Judgment, is to pass an irrevocable Sentence of Happiness or Misery on all Mankind; and so accordingly this here before us must signify, or imply, the most dreadful Case or Condemnation of such Sinners at that Day. This then shall be their Sentence, *Depart ye Cursed into the Fire prepared for the Devil, and his Angels: And the very worst place in this shall be assigned them, They shall have their Portion with Hypocrites;* for such they are in the highest Nature and Degree. They who believe in God, and do thus shamefully Dissemble with him, or deny him in an Adulterous and Sinful Generation, when it may be most Glorious or Necessary to own or attest his Truth, strictly to maintain Faith and a good Conscience, are the most Guilty, and shall be the most Miserable of all Men in another World: *Of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father, with the holy Angels.* And having thus as briefly,

ly, and as plainly, as I could, set forth the dreadful Punishment of such Men, especially as here intimated, or represented by our Saviour.

I think it may be very needfull and requisite to propound, in the Fifth and Last place, The means to avoid this so very Great and Dangerous Evil. In order whereunto I shall lay down these following Rules or Directions.

1. Let us consider, The shortness and great uncertainty of this present Life. This being a most likely means to prevent all Temptations to this Evil ; which are occasioned through Mens overmuch Concern or Fondness for this present World. This (as we before observed) doth too often make us withdraw our Thoughts from God, and become Treacherous against him : Wherefore if Men would learn to set a due Estimate on Things here below, and consider these Worldly Pleasures and Enjoyments, as they are in themselves, mean and transitory ; and that as *Solomon* saith, *All is Vanity and Vexation of Spirit*, We should be less desirous or inclined to purchase them at so high a Price. Is a little temporal Interest, that may soon come to nothing ? Is a vain blast of Honour or Ambition, or any thing that we can aim at in this World, Satisfactory and Lasting ? Why then should they any wise disettle us in the great Concerns of Faith and Religion ? Can any Thing in this World be worth the buying at so dear a Rate ? *The fashion of this World* (saith the Apostle) *passeth away*. And would we but esteem of it accordingly, it would induce us to have meaner thoughts of Things here below, and set them upon Things above. And hereupon we should be fully convinc'd, That Truth and Religion, were the only solid and lasting Comforts ; and that we have nothing here so valuable as Faith and a good Conscience. But if we are still resolved to make Mammon our God, and to prefer the Pleasure or Interest of this World before all Things, it is to be expected and not wondered at, that Men *should be*

be ashamed of Christ, and his Words, in this Adulterous and Sinful Generation.

2. Let us duly consider and reflect upon, The great Concern and Interest of our Souls: Which seems to be the very means or remedy here propounded by our Saviour himself, for the prevention of so great an Evil, Ver. 36. *For what shall it profit a Man, if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul? Or what shall a Man give in exchange for his Soul? Whosoever therefore shall be, &c.* Suppose we could promote the highest Interest here in this World, yet this is not able to preponderate or make amends for, the Loss or Damage we sustain thereby, or undergo for it. Our Souls or Spirits are of a most durable and lasting Nature: Now Religion promotes their great and highest Interest; by adhering closely to Faith and a good Conscience, We procure *the Love and Favour of God, which is better than Life it self.* We lay up an incorruptable Treasure in Heaven. We secure our best part, That which is indeed only and properly our selves. Let us then but value these our Souls at a due and reasonable Rate, and we shall not be apt to be seduced, by unworthy Compliances, to renounce or be ashamed of our highest Interest, and to cast away our selves for ever. Would we thus frequently think of, and deeply consider the great Value and Interest of our immortal Souls, it would happily secure our falling into so great an Evil, and most effectually subdue all kind of Temptations to it, unless Men were disposed to run themselves upon the most apparent Ruin and Destruction. And this will bring me to a

3. Thing requisite thereunto: A due and frequent Examination of our present Faith and Religion. 'Tis a duty plainly laid down, and strictly enjoined by the Apostle, 2 Cor. 13.5. *Examine your selves whether ye be in the Faith: prove your own selves: know ye not your own selves how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be Rebekates.* A firmness in Faith doth necessarily imply a previous Knowledge and Under-

Understanding of it ; for we cannot be said to be withdrawn from what we do not first own and understand. Now 'tis much to be feared and suspected, That too many, who seem to be very Resolute, and make a very great Noise about Faith and Religion, do not rightly, if at all, conceive or apprehend what they mean by them. For Men are apt to take up with Hear-say, Education, or the like : Whereas that Faith is only and properly ours, which we embrace upon our own Knowledge or Approbation. And now to prevent or avoid the Evil before us, let us duly weigh and consider how we are disposed and qualified in the great and weighty Matters of Religion. There is much talk, and a great noise made about it in the World ; But doth my Soul rightly apprehend or consider what is meant by it, or what is the design of it ? Do I believe the Word of God, and those great and mysterious Truths he hath discovered to me ? Am I afraid of his Judgments, assured of his Promises, and convinced of his Veracity in all Things ? Do I trust upon his Power, Mercy, and Goodness ? And am I assured of his just Anger and Severity ? Am I convinced and perswaded in the Truth and Excellency of those Things I profess to believe ? And is all this firmly fixed and rooted in my Soul ; *Not in Word or in Tongue, but in Deed and in Truth ? And do I believe with all my Heart, with all my Soul, and with all my Mind ?* Hereupon I may say with the Apostle, *Beloved, if in these things our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.* And this will be such a Qualification as will keep us steady and immovable against all Opposition : We shall have that Conviction from within, and those regular Motions in our Hearts, as will dispose us to a futable Behaviour in all our Actions : For as a good Tree cannot bring forth corrupt Fruit, so a Mind well Principled and Indued, will be evermore happily disposed to Subdue and Conquer whatever may tempt us to this Sin. And believe me, it requires a firm and well settled Faith to bear us up against all those Hardships, and Difficulties that oppose us in our Christian State. Whence you see how necessary and requisite it is seriously and often to

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consider the Case between God and our Souls, to become every day more and more confirmed and settled in the great and weighty Concerns of our Faith and our Religion : And hereupon we may do well in our present Circumstances to consider the Nature and Excellency of that Faith which is professed among us, that we grow in it more and more, and be firm and constant to it. For we enjoy, God be blessed, a Faith truly Orthodox and Catholick, in the best and purest Church upon Earth : That doth not prohibit or lock up the holy Scriptures from any, but doth enjoin and practice the constant and daily Use and Reading of them : Where Sacraments are administer'd as Christ enjoin'd them, in a most grave, solemn, and decent Manner : Whose Prayers are most pious and heavenly, every way suited to our several Wants and Necessities, and able to warm our Souls with a most fervent Zeal and Devotion. Let us study to improve in the knowledge and practice of this Faith, which will happily secure us from all dangerous Errors and Superstition. Here we are taught and enjoin'd due Obedience to God, *strict Loyalty to our Prince*, Love and Charity to all Men. Its Doctrins are Sound and Orthodox. Its Discipline Pure and Primitive : *And as many as walk by this Rule, peace be on them, and on the Israel of God.* And now having so Good, so True, and Sound a Faith and Religion ; if we desire and expect that God should preserve and continue it to us, *Let us hold fast this Profession of our Faith without wavering* : That nothing prevail upon us to injure, desert or betray, this truly Catholick and Apostolick Faith, as professed in the Church of *England*. The more we consider of, or know it, the better shall we like it, and become the firmer in it upon a due and serious Examination and right Understanding of it ; We shall find it will both deserve and instruct us in a firm Constancy and Resolution against all Opposition and Difficulty whatever. *Finally, my Brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might. Put on the whole Armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the Wiles of the Devil. For we wrestle not against Flesh and Blood, but against Principalities, against Powers, against the Rulers against spiritual wickednesses of the darkness of this World,*

World, on ~~High places~~ : wherefore take unto you the whole Armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil Day, and having done all to Stand, Eph. 6. 10.

4. It may be again requisit herein to set before us the Pattern and Example of Christ, who was eminent in all Perfections, but especially Remarkable for this; insomuch that he himself tells us, *For this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the World, that I should bear Witness unto the Truth.* Which he never dissembled, but constantly asserted with the greatest Courage and Resolution; *I speak openly in the Synagogue.* So far was he from Fear or Cowardice, and so compleat this Pattern that he underwent the extreamest Sufferings even unto Death for Truth, and a good Cause. *This Captain of our Salvation* being so Brave and Generous, we are obliged both in ~~Faith~~ and Duty *Honour* to imitate and resemble his Courage and Constancy; and, like him, firmly maintain Truth and Integrity, whatever it costs us. This will resemble us to Christ at present, and bring us to the Enjoyment of him hereafter. Whereupon I shall conclude with the Apostle, 1 Tim. 6. 13. *I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good Confession, that thou keep this Commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

5. For another prevention or direction against this great Evil, let us often think and consider of that great and terrible Threatning here mentioned; *And that if we be ashamed of him, and his Words, in this Adulterous and Sinful Generation, if him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father, with the holy Angels.* And certainly frequent and serious reflexions on that great and glorious Appearance, and that his coming in such a Solemn and Terrible manner to recompence Punishment on us, should preserve us firm and steadfast in all holy Duties. For should it not make us even now shrink and tremble to think with our selves, that he will call us to a strict Account, and punish us most severely for these things another Day. How shall we look, or what shall we be able to say, when we come to appear before him in such Majesty and Honour?

Wherefore

Wherefore if we keep the Thoughts of this so great and terrible Appearance always fresh, and settled in our Minds, it will make us not dare to be guilty of so great a Sin, as we will answer hereafter at our utmost peril. *For if we deny him, he also will deny us, 2 Tim. 2. 12.*

6. Let us be strict and sincere in all holy Duties, *That we adorn the Doctrin of Christ in all things, and walk worthy of our Profession.* A good Faith is the most of all indanger'd by an undue and irregular Practice. If by our ungodly and wicked Lives we Dishonour our Religion, we make a very forward step towards a denial of it, and it may be just in God quite to remove it from us. If therefore we would consult the Interest of true Religion, and do design, or would desire, the security and continuance of it; Let us walk conscientiously by the Rule we profess, and not dare any longer to continue practices so repugnant to all Piety and Religion, remembering what the Apostle threatens some, *Who because they received not the love of the Truth, that they might be saved. For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, 2 Thess. 2. 10.*

But to compleat, and perfect all, we must be sure to superadd in the Seventh and Last Place, our most humble and hearty Prayers to Almighty God, That he by his Grace, or Holy Spirit, would assist us against this great and fatal Evil. *That he would support us under all Dangers, and carry us through all Temptations. That he would stablish, strengthen, settle us. That he would graft in our Hearts the Love of his Name, increase in us true Religion, nourish us with all Goodness, and of his great Mercy keep us in the same. That he being our Ruler and Guide, we may so pass through things Temporal, that we finally lose not the things Eternal. That so Christ our Lord may not be ashamed of us, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father, with the holy Angels.—*

Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through Grace, comfort your Hearts, and stablish you in every good Word and Work, 2 Thess. 2. 16, 17.

Christian Supports

UNDER THE

TERRORS of DEATH.

PSALM. XXIII. 4.

Yea tho I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me.

That mighty and continual care which the Divine Providence hath over us, is very gratefully represented by such soft and tender expressions, and characters of God, as do bespeak an abundant Affection and regard for us, giving us all the assurance and security imaginable of an infinite kindness and compassion constantly engaged for us.

So when our Lord doth comfort his Disciples with the Doctrine of Providence, he thus expresseth it, *Your heavenly Father knoweth, that you have* Mat. 6. 32. *need of all these Things.* What can be dearer and more solicitous than the Affections and concernment

Christian Supports under

cernment of a Parent? Another of the like kind to the same end and purpose, is here mention'd and apply'd by *David*, who seems to assure or challenge to himself, the extraordinary care and protection of God, under all, the very worst circumstances, from the sutable character of Kindness and Indearment he ascribes to him, *ver. 1. The Lord is my Shepherd*, and thence makes this natural Inference, *I shall not want*. He will most certainly take care of me, for to continue the Parallel or Similitude here before us, *ver. 2, He maketh me lie down in green Pastures, or Pastures of tender Grass, he leadeth me beside still Waters, or Waters of quietness*: Which is spoken with allusion to the most grateful things or conditions, that God will bestow upon, or provide for his People; his goodness will take care, that they shall have what is most proper and convenient for them. And when they are brought to any distress, he will deliver them out of it, reduce them to a happy condition, and set them right and safe in their ways, *ver. 3. He restoreth my Soul, he leadeth me in the Paths of righteousness for his Names sake*, and which is more, when they are under the most unpromising circumstances, in that sad and doleful condition, which we must all come to and lie under, the dismal pressure and stroke of Death; even herein the People of God are relieved and supported

ted by this extraordinary Divine care and goodness; *Yea, tho I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me.*

In which words are two things considerable:

First, The terror or severity of a dying State, *Yea, tho I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death.*

Yet Secondly under such dismal circumstances God doth most abundantly comfort and support us; *Yea, tho I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me.*

First, 'Tis observable, that holy *David* doth here remember us of the terror and severity of a Dying State or Condition; *Yea tho I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death*; which is greatly signified by almost every word in it, *Yea* עַיִן *etiamfi*, Notwithstanding, implying the utmost distress or extremity, I walk אֶלְכָּם *ambulavero*, I shall walk; intimating a leasurely, and so a more tormenting passage. בְּיַם *in Valle*, the *Septuagint* ἐν μέσῳ in the middle, the depth or extreimity of the shadow of death צֶלְמַי, *in Valle umbræ lethalis*, in the thickest of the deadly shade, i.e. *in ipsissima & profundissima mortis umbræ*, in the deepest and utmost shade or sorrow of death. The Word here, *Bithner.* saith one, *Notat horribilem quandam mortis speciem & figuram (qualis morientium oculis observatur)*
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tristissimam. It denotes a very horrid appearance of death, and that most dismal apprehension of it, which Men usually have when they come to die, every way beset with horror and distraction, in a word, a terrible and *approaching* destruction (*qui enim ad umbram accedit non longe à corpore abest*) He that is in the shadow, is not far from the substance or thing it self,

Thus the *Psalmist* represents a dying State as most severe and terrible, agreeable to what he tells us of it from his own experience, *My heart is sore pained within me, and the pains of death are fallen upon me, fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror,* or as it is in the other Translation, *an horrible dread hath overwhelmed me.*

Death, or rather the preliminary passage to it, and the way into the other World, is attended with great horror and affliction, and is beyond expression harsh and terrible; to which *Job* may have some reference, when he saith, *O that my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the ballances together, for now it would be heavier than the sand of the Sea, therefore my words are swallowed up* (that is, I want words to express my grief) *for the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit, the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.* And that this was the utmost extremity of distress or affliction

the Terrours of Death.

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he could think of, appears from that Standard of Sorrow, which he makes it *Chap. 24. 17, If one know them, they are in the terrours of the shadow of death*, which he therefore calls *The King of* ^{*Chap. 18. 14.*} *terrours*. The greatest of all humane Evils or Miseries. And now that great terrour and severity, which doth accompany a dying State or Condition, may be occasioned;

First, From the pains or agonies of it.

Secondly, Mens misgiving thoughts of their future State.

Thirdly, Their foregoing all the Pleasures and Enjoyments of this World.

Fourthly, The fence of Guilt or Sin, that will then crowd in upon us.

Fifthly, The more and greater Assaults of our Spiritual Adversary.

Sixthly, The thoughts and conviction of an ensuing Judgment. Upon all which accounts our dying Circumstances will appear sufficiently dreadful and terrible.

The first great terror of Death doth arise **FROM THE PAINS OR AGONIES THAT USUALLY ATTEND IT**; For however it is to appearance, there may be, its very likely, even in the smoothest passage from this to the other World, some rugged and uneven paths which can be perceived by none, but those that tread them, certain

tain it is that in the general, there is a great deal of hardship and difficulty at such a time and in such Circumstances as these, from those pains and sorrows which do naturally attend that condition, for in loosing that knot, in dissolving the close Conjunction of Soul and Body, there must be, and we have reason to say there is, a great deal of unconceivable Anguish and Affliction, 'tis an extream violence to Nature, and the utmost contradiction to it. And therefore must mightily fret and molest us, for whence (but from the most horrid pain and uneasiness) can proceed such extravagant convulsions, cold sweats, deadly faintings, short breathing, distraction of the Eyes, and other dreadful Agonies that attend it? For if these and the like, which we observe in daily Spectacles of Mortality are dreadful to behold; What must they be to those poor Creatures that do, and to us that shall suffer under them? And therefore a good man, that is not afraid of death, can't but shrink and tremble to think of the way to it, that is beset with such horror and distraction in every particular; O my God may be the language of the most pious Soul, I am willing to die and prepared for thee, being *desirous to depart and to be with Christ*, which is better than a continuance here, but my greatest concern is, how to come to thee on the other Shore, there is a great Gulf between
between

between us, I must be toss'd on a boisterous Sea, and wrack'd by dreadful Waves, and Tempests. Is there no way to *Canaan*, but through a desolate *Wilderness*, and must I go through the valley of the *Shadow of Death*, to that Land which flows with Milk and Honey, that Heavenly *Jerusalem*? These are things contrary to Flesh and Blood, and such as will make the stoutest courage faint and tremble, the pains and terrours of death can't be exprest or conceiv'd by any but who are past or under them. And doubtless the holy Spirit of God doth in some measure intimate to us the sadness of them, when it mentions it as a great blessing to men that it is appointed to them, but *once to die*, Heb. 9. 27. and that there shall be *no more death* in the other State. Rev. 21. 4. One undoubted priviledge whereof, is, that there shall be no more of those dreadful forerunners or concomitants of it, where are sorrows so severe and terrible as endanger the safety of our Souls as well as Bodies, by urging us to impatience, distrust, and the like; thence says our Church, *suffer us not at our last hour through any pains of death to fall from thee.* Our greatest troubles and most dangerous conflict in this World is usually our departure out of it, so that to this case also we may apply that of the Prophet, *The great day of the Lord* Zeph. 1. 14, 15. *is near, it is near and hasteth greatly, even the voice*

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of the day of the Lord, the mighty Men shall cry therein bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness.

Thus the Pains and Agonies of a dying State render it most terrible and dreadful.

Secondly, It will appear again to be so, *FROM MENS MISGIVING THOUGHTS OF THEIR AFTER STATE.* I do not mean their doubtfulness of it, for I am apt to think, that the greatest pretenders that way are sufficiently convinc'd when they come to die, and the sense of that their languishing Condition will soon rub up their belief of another Life; but now most or all Men are under no small distress and perplexity from the conviction and consideration of that future Life, for which none is sufficiently fitted and prepared, but hath reason, especially from himself, to have some diffidence, some distrust or suspicion of his condition in it, and it is what becometh a prudent and a good Man; for an over-weening opinion of ourselves, and a confident presumption of our preparation for Heaven may be ill grounded and mistaken, and seems to be inconsistent with a truly devout and penitent Soul, *Be not high minded but fear* is the Rule that such go by even in these circumstances. We must be sensible,
and

and ought to be especially so, when we come to die, That we have had a great work to do in a little time; and being that God now calls us to give up an account of our Stewardship, it must put us into very great fear and consternation to think with our selves what we have done, and whither we are going, and how can we but suspect our condition; when we consider that we are not able to answer God one word in a thousand, must it not then most deeply concern, and mightily affect our Souls, to consider that near approach to their endless and unalterable State, and the best of Men may have some fear or suspicion at least of their Condition in it. This now is their grand Affair, and if they fail and miscarry here they are irrevocably gone and lost for ever: Who then can avoid being concern'd at this great and weighty change, when he thinks with himself, that he is now hastening into another world, and at the gate of Eternity, tho he fears not death, yet the apprehensions of another State must strike a damp into his Soul, and make him hugely serious and perplexed in his thoughts; *Mens hearts failing them for fear of what may become of them in another State.* Nor is it blamable or unchristian to be so, for besides what Reason the best of Men may have to suspect themselves, such a

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temper as this, will dispose us for all due care and circumspection in that most solemn time and season, and such an humble distrust of our selves may and will have better effects, than a very daring confidence and presumption: For the comfort of good Men, at the most depending upon hope, doth shew that at the best they lie under some doubtfulness and insecurity: And therefore as you see Mens misgiving thoughts, as to a future State, is no small trouble and perplexity to them in their dying circumstances.

Thirdly, Their trouble herein doth further arise, *FROM THE THOUGHTS OF PARTING WITH ALL THE PLEASURES AND ENJOYMENTS HERE BELOW.* Men that have lived in the World must needs have some interest and affections fix'd in it, and there is scarce any that do or can sit so loose to these secular Affairs, as to bear the removal from *them* with an even and undisturbed Spirit; may so far is it from this, that these frequently prove the most pungent considerations or reflexions in that dismal state: *Have I, saith one, laboured all my life time for nothing but vanity and vexation of Spirit, for I find it to be so now; I am to be removed, and to be taken from it: For this have I beat my brains, wearied and molested my self,*

self, for this have I cheated and purloin'd, or this have I overreach'd or supplanted my Brother, wrong'd or oppress'd my Neighbour, and must I be depriv'd of all in a moment? What sorrow like to my sorrow will the Worldling say? And those pleasures that others have too much indulged, will but the more perplex their thoughts when they are thus forc'd from them; nay even the moderate and lawful enjoyment of these things, will occasion in us no small trouble and vexation of mind, at this final parting with them: Tho it behoves us to do it with Christian courage, and Resignation, yet we cannot without extream sorrow and concernment say at that time, *Farewel Wife, farewel Children, farewel Friends, farewel the World finally farewel whatever was here dear and valuable.* And give me leave to add, the more have been Mens comforts, and those of good Men have been the most and truest, the more and greater must be the grief and concernment, for that utter removal, and dismal separation from them.

Fourthly, The troubles of a dying State must be again very great, *FROM THE SENCE OF SIN OR GUILT THAT WILL THEN CROWD IN UPON US.* However we may forget God and our selves in a time of Health and Prosperity, when these decline or forsake

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for sake us, we are usually brought to a sober sense, and in such a languishing State and Condition can hardly avoid it; Conscience, if ever, will certainly awake when we come to die, and we may have observed the greatest Affliction that Men have then suffer'd under, was their not being able to avoid their own thoughts, which are now more bitter and terrible than ever, (and by the way 'tis not only justice but withal goodness in God to make it so.) Now the mind has quick and unbiass'd Reflections on its own Actions, and sets forth its Guilt in true and proper Colours, and therefore the Apostle may well say, *The sting of Death is Sin.* No terror in this State like that which doth redound to us from our guilty Consciences which have now got us under hold, and will lash us severely. We can't now disguise or dissemble our guilt, there is no stifling of it by Riot or Intemperance, lewd and loose Company can divert us no longer; all the live-long day our sins will plague and fret us, and in the wearisome nights, when we count every minute, our guilt will rush in upon our thoughts, attend us in every turn and motion, and render our Souls as restless and uneasie as our Bodies; if what the Prophet saith of wicked Men be true at other times, 'tis much more so at this, *That they are like the*

Isa. 57.
20. 21.

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troubled Sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. *There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.* When we come to die, the greatest melancholly that shall then seize our spirits, will be from the heavy load and burden of our sins, that will be ready to oppress and sink our Souls. Then we shall find that threatning verified in us, *I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.* Psalm. 50. 21. And what grief or anguish can be comparable to that, which redounds from this? When we are going hence, and God gives us *Warning* to remove, must it not concern and afflict us beyond all thought or expression, to consider the danger our Sins have now brought us to? They hide God's face and mercy from us, and in our greatest Distress and highest need of Comfort, threaten us with utter Ruin and Destruction; and nothing now can be so cutting and intollerable as the thoughts of a displeased and angry God. And well may that be so to us which was the greatest of our Saviours troubles, for at his dying hour, the guilt of our sins that lay on him, occasioned the bitterest agony of his Soul, and that dismal exclamation, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me.* Most certainly the sence of guilt will be the bitterest Potion, and the very dregs

Gen. 4. 13.

dregs of that *Cup of trembling*, Our Hearts will faint, and our Souls will *sink within us*, and we shall shake and fear, and *cry mightily*, and have on us such passionate concernment as is inexpressible, from the dismal apprehension of the Divine Wrath and Indignation which our sins have kindled and provok'd against us. So that hereupon it may be said with *Cain*, *My punishment is greater than I can bear.*

Rev. 12. 12.

Fifthly, The troubles of a dying state will appear further considerable, **FROM THE ASSAULTS OF OUR SPIRITUAL ENEMY, WHICH WILL BE THEN MORE AND GREATER THAN EVER.** For to this we may apply what is said of him, *Woe to the Inhabitants of the Earth, for the Devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.* And accordingly we may expect that he will apply his temptations, now more closely and vigorously than ever, for if he discharges this last part effectually, they are utterly lost and gone, and he has gain'd them for ever. Wherefore he may be suppos'd now to set all his Engines on work, and to ply it closely. He takes all the advantages that may be of these extream and difficult circumstances; herein he tempts us to fretfulness and impatience under God's hand,

hand, to a distrust or despair of his goodness. *Dost thou still retain thy Integrity? Curse God Job 2. 9. and die.* If this will not do, he tempts us with too great presumption on the Divine goodness, to a neglect of due Examination and Repentance of our Sins, or distracts our thoughts with Secular Affairs. One way or other, he either keeps us from the duties requisite for that State, or endeavours to make us increase our sin in it. Most certain it is, that the Devil doth now hope, and industriously watch, for his Prey; the last effect of his Malice and Revenge. The case here may be somewhat liken'd to that mention'd of him, *Rev. 12. 4. The Dragon stood before the Woman that was ready to be delivered, for to devour the Child as soon as it was born.* But may our Souls escape like that, and be caught up unto God and to his *Ver. 5. Throne.*

Sixthly, A dying State or Condition, is render'd very dreadful and terrible *FROM THE THOUGHTS OR CONVICTION OF AN AFTER-ACCOUNT OR JUDGMENT.* The Prisoner when going to his Tryal, hath all along every step he takes, very strange and perplexing thoughts, and is beyond expression troubled and uneasie within himself. And what must the case be with Men, when on the

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confines

confines of another World, to think of that great and impartial Judgment and Tribunal, before which they are now summon'd to appear? And how must it affect and cut them, to consider that they are now hastening to the presence of that Righteous and Almighty Judge, who shall strictly examine every thought and *idle word, before whom all things are naked and open?* To consider that after *Death* comes *Judgment*, is that which makes a dying State the most serious and weighty matter in the whole World. What concernment and anxiety must a man truly considerative have at such a time? I am dying, I am departing; that is, in other terms, I am called to give up my Accompts, I am going to be Judged before the great God; behold, what matter so weighty, what concernment comparable to this? This single consideration duly weighed, renders such circumstances very straight and terrible: No other can be the genuine effect of Mens thorough belief and conviction (at that time) of an approaching Judgment.

But we have sufficiently represented the black and tragical part, it may be high time now to draw the Curtain, and set forth a fairer Scene. Well then, notwithstanding a dying condition

is thus severe and terrible, yet we have particular, extraordinary supports and comforts under it. *Yea, though I walk through the Valley of the shadow of Death, I WILL FEAR NO EVIL, FOR THOU ART WITH ME*, to assist me in these straits and necessities, and to afford suitable helps and advantages under them. And now those great supports which God doth give us in these most difficult circumstances, may be consider'd under these following particulars.

First, The thoughts of this State; as the appointment of God.

Secondly, That God is therein peculiarly present with us, and gives us extraordinary helps and assistances of his Divine care and goodness.

Thirdly, The near approach to Heaven and Happiness.

Fourthly, The consideration of Christs Death and Sufferings.

Fifthly, The belief and expectation of a future Resurrection.

Sixthly, The promise and assurance of pardon and forgiveness.

Seventhly, The attendance of God's Holy Angels that are ready to receive our Souls.

Which duly and seriously consider'd, will abundantly qualifie and remove all the terrors and difficulties of a dying State.

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First, *It is a very great support at that time to consider, That the STATE WE ARE NOW BROUGHT TO, IS ACCORDING TO THE DETERMINATE ORDER AND ALLOTMENT OF GOD*, in whom we live, and move, and have our being. He is the breath of our Nostrils, he put our Souls into these Tabernacles, and we are here only Tenants at Will, liable to be dispossessed at Pleasure. And when we consider, that *'tis appointed for all men once to die*, and that it is an irrevocable decree of Heaven that we *MUST all walk through the Valley of the shadow of Death*, why should we *fear any evil*? be dismay'd or terrified, at that which is the will and pleasure of the Almighty, as if some strange and unexpected accident did befall us? For may we not hereupon say with the Apostle, *That no man should be moved with these afflictions, for your selves know that we are appointed thereunto*. Is not Gods hand in my suffering? Is it not in my death? 'Tis an undoubted mitigation even of this sorrow and affliction, to consider that God hath appointed it as the unavoidable Lot and Portion of all men living; so that, on this account, we may say, *I will fear no evil, for thou art with me*.

Secondly, In our dying State or circumstances, *GOD IS PECULIARLY PRESENT WITH US, AND GIVES US EXTRAORDINARY HELPS*

1 Thes. 3. 3.

HELPS AND ASSISTANCES OF HIS CARE AND GOODNESS. *Thou art with me.* That Providence which is always vigilant over us, hath then a more deep and special regard and concern for us. Are the very hairs of our head all number'd? And doth his care extend so far, as that one of these shall not fall to the ground, but by the permission of our Heavenly Father? May we not hence justly conclude, that he is peculiarly careful of us in such danger and extremity as this? *Thou art with me*; it is render'd *Penes me*, in *loquo quo sto*, Thou art near at hand, in the very place where I am, not as an indifferent unconcern'd Spectator, but to be a very present help in trouble. Then this our good God is with us, to comfort our Souls, to support our Spirits, to ease our Pain, and give us patience under it, to soften our cares, to mitigate the pangs and terrours of Death; then the *Eternal* Deut. 33. 27. *God is thy refuge*, and underneath are the everlasting Arms. Such a mighty care of God over us, holy David was abundantly sensible of, and doth express very passionately, *Thou art about my path, and about my bed. The Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. Thou wilt not deliver him into the will of his enemies. The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing; thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.* Psal. 41. The Hebrew word

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word signifies *turn*, *Thou wilt turn all his bed in his sickness*, as it were to make him lie more soft and easie. And he seems to have an undoubted reference hereunto, by what presently follows in this verse: *Thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff comfort me.* *At quid adferunt solatis virga & baculus? adferunt & quidem plurimum,* saith *Erasmus* ingeniously upon it, What comfort doth the rod and staff here import? A great deal; *adversus latrocinia demonum hoc Molientium*, They are those Instruments whereby this great Shepherd doth defend his Flock from the rage and malice of the Devils, that wait to devour us. I am not ignorant, saith he, that some of the Ancients, by the rod here, understand some light affliction, wherewith God doth Chastize; by the staff some more severe and heavy Judgment, whereby he doth punish his people. An opinion, though very pious, yet not so proper for this place; for observe, saith he, the *Psalmist* doth not say, *My rod and my staff*, but *thy rod and thy staff*, and therein speaks more agreeably, to the Metaphor here of Gods being a Pastor; and so we may take the rod and the staff here according to what is usual in Scripture, the rod may be his assisting Grace, the staff our Defence against our ravenous enemy. *Hæc virga pastoris Jesu hic baculus solatio sunt gregi imbecilli*

imbecilli adversus terrores omnium malorum.
 This rod, this staff of the shepherd of our souls, Christ
 Jesus, will be our protection and security against
 all kind of evil. St. Paul, saith he, mentions the
 fiery Darts of the Devil; these Christ keeps from
 us with his staff here mentioned: *Hoc an non mag-*
num interim militaris itineris solacium And is
 not this by the way a great encouragement of
 our Warlike State? How dearly doth our Lord
 Jesus love us, who, as you see, will neglect no-
 thing that may any wise conduce to our pro-
 tection, our refreshment, and our comfort?
 Thus far he, which I have the longer insisted on,
 because it is such a genuine, though unusual In-
 terpretation, and a reasonable representation of
 Gods so great, and peculiar care, and regard for
 us, in this most straight and difficult condition.

To sum up this Head; as nothing is surer
 than the day of Death, and our departure out
 of this earthly Body, which very likely may be
 attended with blackness and terrour, with dread-
 ful pains, and Agonies, too great to be ex-
 prest; yet I may comfortably say, that herein
 the Lord is my helper; yea, though I walk through
 this Valley of the shadow of Death, I will fear no
 evil, for thou art with me. Tho the Arrows of
 the Almighty stick fast in me, and his hand presseth
 me sore; tho my condition be painful and tor-
 menting,

Dan. 5. 26.

Psalm. 73. 23.

menting, and I be stretcht upon my Bed with grief and anguish, and my friends about me lament to think *that the place which now seeth me, shall see me no more,* notwithstanding the decree is past. *That God hath numberd my Life and finish'd it,* and I am now beset with gloominess and darkness, mine eye balls rowl, and my Soul is just on the wing, ready to take its flight into the unknown Regions of the other World, *Nevertheless I am continually with thee, thou hast holden me by my right hand, Thou shalt guide me with thy Council, and afterward receive me to glory; Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none upon Earth that I desire besides thee. My Flesh and my Heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my Portion for ever.* Which brings us to another thing that will relieve and comfort us, in a dying State and Condition, and that is.

Thirdly, THE THOUGHTS OR CONSIDERATION OF OUR NEAR APPROACH TO HAPPINESS AND GLORY. Having hitherto run the race that is set before us, We may expect greater sweets and troubles, and to be more tired, the nearer we come to the end of it. But this is the last Stage, if we can bear up under this only remaining difficulty, the day and the prize is ours, we may go on with patience

Looking

Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our Faith. How must it encourage our endeavours, and support our spirits, under the forest pressure of Death it self, to behold, *with an eye of faith, the glory ready to be revealed*, and to see our Lord, with open arms, ready to receive us? Come, bear up under this, and as it is your worst, it is your very last tryal. There are blessed Mansions prepar'd for you, where *there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.* ^{Rev. 21. 4.} Tho it may not seem consistent with what I have already deliver'd, to lessen the sad and sorrowful circumstances of our dying hours, yet I may say, that if our Souls be duly fix'd on Heaven and Eternity, it must in a great measure abate, and will, I'm sure, outweigh the worst that can be said or conceiv'd of that State. This is able to outballance the utmost tyranny of pains and agonies, and to dispel all clouds and melancholly from our minds. The Night is come, but it brings us to the dawn of Eternity, and *that shadow of Death* is the confine of the days of Heaven. *Yet a little while*, and we are gone into *YONDER* World; and must it not be a mighty satisfaction to us now, to say with the Apostle, *We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolv'd, we have a building of God, an*

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house

^{2 Chron. 5. 1.}

house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. To think that the pain will be over in a short time, is some ease to my mind in the greatest affliction; but to add, and consider withal, that it will be presently succeeded with joy unspeakable and full of glory, must administer to our Souls the highest consolation. *I will fear no evil, for thou art with me*; to say farther, and I shall be with thee, be transferred to that blissful State, to the presence of God, where there is fulness of joys and pleasures for evermore, is my most unspeakable support, and the very height of comfort and satisfaction. *The years draw nigh in which thou shalt say I have no pleasure in them, while the Sun, or the Light, or the Moon, or the Stars, are darkned. In the day when the Keepers of the House shall tremble. Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way. The silver Cord is loosed.* Observe, upon that melancholly, and tho elegant description, of our dying condition, Solomon subjoyns us a comfort against the dismal thoughts of those sad circumstances, and against Death it self; the consideration of our acceptance with God in the Immortal State. *Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return to God who gave it.* In a word, this single consideration, that we shall ever be with the Lord, duly weighed and rely'd on, will abundantly

Psal. 16: 11.

Eccles. 12.

dantly relieve and support us against all the Powers of Death, in its most horrid and ghastly appearances, and sufficiently subdue the great difficulties of the dying State.

Fourthly, This is again render'd further easie and supportable *FROM THE CONSIDERATION OF CHRISTS DEATH AND SUFFERINGS*; not only as they do expiate our sins, and so bring comfort to our Souls, as we may have occasion to shew presently, but withal, upon the account of his great and glorious conquest over Death and the Grave, which he vanquish'd and subdu'd, in the very worst, and most horrid circumstances, that they might have less power, and exercise less tyranny over us. Whereupon the Apostle triumphantly speaks, *Death is swallowed up in Victory. O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.* 1 Cor. 15. 54.

To consider that Christ our Lord underwent the same before us, and in a more dismal manner than we are able to bear or imagine, is some mitigation in this most sorrowful condition; considering withal, that in doing so, he hath made the way more smooth and passable for us. Death spent his most fiery Darts on him, and he hath so subdu'd his greatest strength and utmost power, that he either cannot, or dare not be over severe

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and rigorous with us; at least, he can go no further than he will permit him. *I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore,* Amen: *And have the keys of Hell and of Death.* Death is now purely under Christs command, and can do nothing but by leave from him; and therefore, we may justly hope that our gracious Lord will not suffer him to exert his utmost fury upon us. How suitable then is that pious Prayer of our Church at this season: *O Saviour of the World, who by thy Cross and precious Blood hast redeemed us, save us and help us, we humbly beseech thee, O Lord.*

Rev. I. 18.

Visitation of
the Sick.

Fifthly, The troubles and sorrows of a dying State, are again very much abated and subdu'd **FROM THE THOUGHIS OF A FUTURE RESURRECTION**, which will satisfie our minds, and make abundant amends for all the doubts or troubles that do now attend us. What though we suffer under pains, and may be griev'd to think that part of us shall be the prey of Worms and Corruption, yet the belief of this truth will soon dispel the sorrows that arise from thence. The time is coming (and Lord, what joy is it in these straits?) when my Soul now returning to God, shall meet this body again glorious and refin'd, never more to be vext with, or separated from it. *This shadow of Death, and that sorrowful*

rowful Night, that is now beset with clouds and horror, will conduct us to the morn of our Resurrection; and how can we be *sorrowful as Men without hope*? This our Church looks upon as the most comfortable support, for the consideration of our own, or others dissolution, when in its great Prudence and Piety, it appoints that Lesson concerning the great Article of the Resurrection in the Burial Service, a Doctrine if rightly fix'd and believ'd, that will render us *stedfast and immoveable* in the deepest sorrows.

Thy Brother shall rise again, was the comfort our Saviour gave to Mary, and is such as will be able

St. John 11.
23.

to bear up our spirits, even in the heaviest tryals of a dying State. For how must it support me and others, at that time, to speak after this, or the like manner? 'You behold me, Brethren, 'seemingly forsaken and distressed; and, indeed, 'My complaint is bitter, for my soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, and my stroke is heavier than my groanings. But yet I would have you believe and think as I do, *that I am only to withdraw for a small season; and as the Prophet speaks, to enter into my Chambers, and shut my Doors about me, and to bide my self, as it were, for a little moment, for thy dead men shall live; together with my dead body shall they arise. And thereupon, observe what followeth: Awake and sing,*

Isai. 26. 20.

'ye

ye that dwell in the dust. This long and solemn parting may cause grief in our hearts, and tears in our eyes; but shall we not be comforted, *considering the time is coming, in which, All that are in the Graves, shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth.*

John
St. Matth. 5. 28.

Sixthly, The Terrours of a dying State are mightily qualified and abated, *FROM GODS MOST COMFORTABLE PROMISE AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND FORGIVENESS.* The greatest and the truest sorrow of a dying State, is that which is occasion'd from the sence of Sin and Guilt: *Hinc illæ lacrymæ.* This is the cause of our chiefest trouble and uneasiness at that time, and very justly too, for it is the most dismal fate as ever was threatned; *Ye shall die in your sins.* But when I come with a message of Pardon and Forgiveness, and this be rightly received and well grounded, then 'tis *Son be of good chear, thy sins be forgiven thee.* To be convinc'd that I have made my peace with God, and that my Pardon is sealed in Heaven, this will strengthen us in the midst of sorrows, even to the defiance of all pain and anguish: Instead of complaints, we may hereupon joyfully say, *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.* I do neither care nor value what I suffer, so I be reconciled to God, and have my sins wash'd away by the

St. John 8. 24.

St. Matth. 9. 2.

the Blood of Christ. And such may be the state of every one of us, for upon a sincere Faith and hearty Repentance, God will have mercy upon us, *Isa. 55. 7.* and abundantly pardon. Though your sins be as scar- *Isa. 1. 18.* let, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. This blessed promise takes away the sting of death, and puts us beyond the reach of its terrour and malignity; and therefore our Church may well prescribe it as the great, or only comfort, and security, in such a state or condition. Thus saying, *The Almighty Lord*, *Visit. of Sick.* who is a most strong Tower to all them that put their trust in him, to whom all things in heaven, in earth, and under the earth, do bow and obey, be now and evermore thy defence, and make thee know and feel, that there is no other name under Heaven given to Man, in whom, and through whom, thou mayest receive health and salvation, but only the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Seventh, and last comfortable Consideration that we have against the great sorrows of Death is. **THE ATTENDANCE OF GODS HOLY ANGELS READY TO RECEIVE OUR SOULS AND TO CONDUCT THEM INTO THE MANSION OF THE BLESSED.** For he *Psal. 91. 11.* will give his Angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways, certainly then in these, the most difficult of any. For are they not all *Heb. 1. 14.* Ministering spirits sent forth to Minister *διὰ τὸς μέλλοντας* for them that shall, or are ready to inherit Salvation? The

The blessed God whose instruments the Angels are (and who is therefore alone to be ador'd for it) hath out of wonderful condescension towards us, assign'd those glorious happy Beings, for our safety and protection in our dying *Straits* **Strength**, and Difficulties. For the holy Scripture tells us, They carried *Lazarus* his Soul into *Abrahams bosom*. And in our Saviours dreadful Agonies *there appeared an Angel unto him from Heaven strengthening him*. And if such were able to bring him relief in his Circumstances, they may well do it to ours, which at the worst, come vastly short of his sorrowful Death and Passion. Why now should we be amaz'd, and terrified at the thoughts or approach of that most serious and solemn hour.

Psal. 43. 5, 6. *Why art thou so heavy, O my soul? And why art thou so disquieted within me? O put thy trust in God. He and his blessed Angels continually watch over us for good.* God in the ways we have heard, or others, as he knows best, *Will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come on all the World.*

Rev. 3. 10. *God is our refuge and strength; a very present help in trouble: Therefore will we not fear, tho the earth be moved. The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.*

Psal. 46. 1.

In all time of our Tribulation, in the hour of Death, and in the Day of Judgment, Good Lord deliver us.

F I N I S.

